## Texas Department of Transportation

Providing safe, effective, and efficient movement of people and goods.

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## Lone Star Texas License Plate Set to Hit Texas Roadways

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June 2, 2009

AUSTIN – Eight-year-old John Thomsett of Gilmer, Tx. joined Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) officials on Tuesday to announce that the colorful new general-issue license plate, Lone Star Texas, is about to hit Texas' roadways.

"My fellow Texans, I am pleased to announce that the new license plates have left the factory," John said during a TxDOT press conference at the Travis County tax office in Austin. "You will begin seeing it on cars and trucks near you real soon."

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TxDOT began shipping the new general-issue plates to the 254 county tax offices statewide on Monday. County tax offices should have the Lone Star Texas plate in stock by no later than June 12.

You may download high-resolution versions of the passenger and truck plates.

"Because our state is real big, it will take about two weeks for the plates to arrive in all the county tax offices," John explained. County tax offices will need to exhaust their current plate inventory before issuing the Lone Star Texas plates.

In February 2008, John and his classmates at Gilmer Elementary School helped to choose the Lone Star Texas design as part of TxDOT's first online vote for a new general-issue license plate. John's teacher, Kerry Hradecky, cast the vote for the class.

"I was very excited that my students could be involved and have a voice in voting for such a prevalent symbol - our state license plate," said Hradecky, who teaches first grade at the Gilmer Elementary School. "We discussed that different states have different license plates based upon state characteristics and our privilege as Americans to vote."

Cindy Jones, who can trace her Texas roots back to an ancestor in the Republic of Texas Navy, said she cast her vote for the Lone Star Texas plate because it shows off the state's majesty and pride.

"The license plate was an inspiration - and I never thought I'd say that!," said Jones, who lives in Mason. "Allowing everyone to vote was a great idea."

Ed Serna, TxDOT assistant executive director for operations, said at the press conference the new general-issue plate goes by a special name at the agency. "At TxDOT we affectionately call it 'The People's Plate,'" Serna said.

Texans chose the Lone Star Texas plate from five different designs. The plate design received 455,878 of the more than 1.1 million Texans votes. The Texas Transportation Commission, which by law must approve the state's general-issue plate, unanimously agreed with online voters and approved the plate on Feb. 28, 2008.

The opportunity for a new general-issue license presented itself when the agency realized it was going to run out of the six-character plate patterns. The new general-issue plate features seven-character license plate numbers.

It also is the state's first digitally-produced and full color general-issue license plate. The Lone Star Texas design features clouds in a blue Texas sky and brushes of red and blue with the familiar Lone Star in white. The plate also features the Davis mountain range.

The digital process creates a more environmentally-friendly plate, eliminating the need for 484 gallons of paint thinners and 396 gallons of ink annually, and the energy needed to power huge ovens that dried the plate ink. The factory at the state prison in Huntsville, where the license plates are manufactured, was retooled and outfitted with new equipment for digital production.

"We are asking Texans to join us in our concern for the environment by not rushing down to their local county tax

office to purchase this plate," said Rebecca Davio, director of TxDOT's Vehicle Titles and Registration Division, which oversees the manufacturing of the state's plates. "Our plates are made of recyclable aluminum but if everyone decides to run out for the new plate then good plates will be wasted."

Texans eligible for the new license plate will be those that purchase a new vehicle, and those whose license plates are seven years old, the mandatory time when plates are replaced because they begin to lose their safety reflectivity.

Nelda Wells Spears, the Travis County tax assessor-collector, reminded Texans that the reflective sheeting on license plates helps rescuers and citizens spot vehicles at night that have run off the road or are pulled off on the shoulder. License plates also help to save lives and catch criminals, Spears said.

"One of the primary tools for police when they are looking for a suspect, whether it be someone who abducted a child or robbed a bank, is to ask citizens to be on the look out for a certain vehicle model with a specific license plate number," Spears said. "While there may be thousands of the same type of vehicles on our roadways there will be only one with that unique license plate number."

There are more than 21 million registered vehicles in Texas and the majority of them have general-issue license plates. License plates are a part of "Put Texas in your corner," the vehicle registration process that includes annual renewal of the registration sticker.

Since 1917, the Texas Department of Transportation has been responsible for the state's license plates. This new general-issue license plate may be the agency's last. In the Texas legislative session that ended on Monday, June 1, lawmakers passed a bill to create the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles, which would take over responsibility for the state's license plates. The bill is awaiting Gov. Rick Perry's signature.